

CLAIMS

1. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system for at least one service provider comprising:
 - means for inputting a business appointment schedule of at least one service provider at a first location;
 - means for transmitting at least a portion of said service provider's updated business appointment schedule over the Internet to service receivers at a plurality of locations remote from said first location, where said appointment schedule is visually displayed to the service receivers;
 - means for receiving input from said service receivers at said plurality of remote locations to schedule appointments with said service provider; and
 - means for updating said service provider's business appointment schedule.
2. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 wherein said inputting means comprises means for visually displaying said service provider's schedule.

3. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 comprising a plurality of means for inputting appointment schedules of a plurality of service providers at a plurality of remote locations.
4. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 3 wherein at least some of said plurality of service providers are unrelated businesses.
5. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 3 wherein at least some of said plurality of service providers are related business.
6. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 5 wherein at least some of said plurality of service providers are unrelated business.
7. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 4 wherein at least some of said plurality of service providers provide the same type of service.

8. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 wherein said input receiving means comprises means for receiving payment information.
9. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 8 wherein said payment information comprises credit card information.
10. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 8 wherein said payment information comprises information other than credit card information.
11. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 wherein said input receiving means further comprises means for receiving requests for stand-by appointments for appointment times which are already reserved.
12. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 11 further comprising means for notifying any service receiver who requested said already reserved appointment time, if said appointment becomes available.

13. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 11 further comprising means for informing service receivers that stand-by times are no longer available.
14. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 further comprising links to websites unrelated to said service provider.
15. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 14 further comprising links to other websites which provide directions to the service provider's location.
16. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 wherein said system also comprises means for receiving input of at least one service receiver's schedule and displaying said service receiver's schedule to said service receiver.
17. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 16 further comprising discernible indicia of a schedule conflict which is provided to a service receiver if said service receiver inputs an appointment with a service provider which would conflict with the service receiver's schedule.

18. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 17 wherein said discernible indicia comprises a visible display.
19. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 17 wherein said discernible indicia comprises an audible signal.
20. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 16 further comprising indicia of a schedule conflict which is provided to a service receiver if said service receiver inputs an appointment with a service provider which would conflict with the schedule of a person other than said service receiver.
21. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 wherein said inputting means also receives and updates a service provider's personal schedule.
22. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 21 further comprising indicia of a schedule conflict if a service provider inputs a business schedule which may conflict with said service provider's personal schedule.

23. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 16 wherein a plurality of service receivers have coded access to each other's schedules.
24. An Internet-based appointment scheduling system according to claim 1 wherein said input receiving means receives scheduling input from a plurality of service providers and a service receiver is provided with the ability to schedule an appointment with at least one of said plurality of service providers.
25. A method of providing a plurality of service receivers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities for at least one service provider over the Internet comprising the steps of:
- providing means for inputting and displaying at least one appointment schedule of at least one service provider at a first location;
 - inputting at least a portion of a service provider's business appointment schedule into said inputting and displaying means, said portion comprising open time slots;
 - providing access to a visual display of at least a portion of said service provider's appointment schedule

at a plurality of remote locations to a plurality of service receivers, wherein said displays comprise time periods for which appointments have not yet been scheduled;

providing said service receivers with the ability to schedule appointments during said open time slots from said remote locations by providing input to schedule appointments with said service provider and thereby changing said service provider's schedule of available appointments;

wherein said step of displaying said appointment schedule comprises providing updated displays.

26. A method of providing a plurality of service receivers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 wherein said inputting and displaying means comprises a computer.

27. A method of providing a plurality of service receivers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 wherein said service receivers provide input through a computer to schedule appointments over the Internet.

28. A method of providing a plurality of service receivers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 wherein said step of receiving input from said service receiver also changes said service receiver's schedule.
29. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 further comprising the step of inputting at least a portion of a service provider's personal schedule.
30. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 29 wherein said service provider's personal schedule is not displayed at said remote locations.
31. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 wherein a plurality of service providers' schedules are input into said inputting and displaying means.
32. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim

31 wherein at least portions of said service providers' schedules are displayed at said remote locations.

33. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 31 wherein said service providers are located at a single business location.

34. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 31 wherein said service providers are from unrelated businesses.

35. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 34 wherein said service providers are from the same type of business.

36. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 31 wherein said service providers are from related businesses.

37. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 further comprising the step of requiring some form of payment from a service receiver when a service receiver schedules an appointment with a service provider.
38. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 37 further comprising the step of verifying a payment from a service receiver.
39. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 further comprising the step of providing service receivers with the ability to schedule stand-by appointments for appointment periods which are already reserved.
40. A method of providing a plurality of service receivers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 39 further comprising the step of providing service receivers with a message if said previously reserved appointment period becomes available.

41. A method of providing a plurality of service receivers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 further comprising providing service receivers links to websites unrelated to said service providers.
42. A method of providing a plurality of service receivers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 further comprising the step of providing a discernible indication if a service receiver attempts to schedule a conflicting appointment.
43. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 further comprising the step of providing a discernible indication if a service provider attempts to schedule a conflicting appointment.
44. A method of providing a plurality of service providers with remote appointment scheduling capabilities according to claim 25 further comprising inputting a schedule for a person other than said service receiver.